

# CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association  
Spring 1999

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**     *Brian Perkin*

As you may know, Lorne Gold stepped down as OLA President in October and asked if I would move into that position. Lorne deserves a big 'thank you' for all his hard work over the years. He continues on the Board as Past President and is now Chairperson of the Nominating Committee as well as Environment & Health Committee Chairperson. As the 'new kid on the dock', I'd like to thank Lorne and the entire OLA Board for their help in getting me up to speed on the issues and work undertaken on your behalf by the association.

One of the issues of concern is the water levels question and I'd like to clarify one point. At the 1998 Annual General Meeting, outgoing President Lorne Gold made a commitment that the Board of the OLA would take no action to open beaver dams on Jebb's Creek or remove debris until the Association had the opportunity to consider and respond to the report of the new subcommittee set up to study the effects that the creek might have on water levels, unless an emergency situation occurred. The last issue of *Captain Otty's Log* carried a statement that appeared to contradict that commitment. Please be assured that the Board has not considered removing beaver dams or debris from the creek at any time since the 1998 AGM. The statement in the Log was unauthorized and published without its knowledge. The board stands by its original commitment. This commitment however, has no bearing on the right of individual property owners to take action if their property is threatened by high water levels.

A complete review on Jebb's Creek appeared in the June 1998 Newsletter. It provided a summary of work done on the creek since 1966 by the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, the Otty Lake Association and others. The work on the creek over the years has been done in response to concerns of property owners over low water levels, high water levels and water quality. It is because of these ongoing concerns, that the Association voted last summer to form a committee to try to find some answers to water level and water quality issues. I am happy to report the committee has started its work and will get technical assistance from the MNR and the RVCA. If this area is of special concern to you, we invite all interested

members to come forward and join in this group's work.

Finally, please make note of the new boating and equipment regulations that affect just about everything from cruisers to canoes. New age and horsepower rules went into effect April 1st of this year. The rules prohibit persons under 16 years of age from operating personal watercraft (Sea-dos, etc.) even if accompanied by an adult. Pleasure craft operators under 12 years old, not directly supervised by someone over 16, can operate a boat with no more than 10 horsepower. 12 - 16 year-olds not directly supervised can operate no more than 40 hp. Plus, boaters will eventually be tested before receiving 'operator cards'. Look for further details in this newsletter. We'll try and keep you up to date on the new rules and registration deadlines. Enjoy a safe and enjoyable boating season in 1999!

## **LOOSESTRIFE AND ONTARIO BEETLES**     *Lorne Gold*

Purple Loosestrife is a plant that was brought to north-eastern North America from Europe in the late nineteenth century. As it had no natural enemies, it spread rapidly westward and arrived in the Ottawa area a few years ago. It has become a threat for the natural vegetation that exists in our meadows and wetlands.

There exist, in Europe, species of beetles that feed solely on loosestrife and are effective biological controls for the plant. Experiments have been carried out on their effectiveness for North America. In 1992, they were approved for release in Canada and are now commercially available. Release packages of at least 2,000 beetles can be purchased, for example, under the name "Ontario Beetles" from a company in Cambridge, Ont. These beetles have the biological name of *Galerucella californiensis*.

The Friends of the Perth Wildlife Reserve plan to carry out an experiment on their effectiveness this summer in the Perth Wildlife Reserve. The Association agreed, at the 1998 AGM, to provide \$200 in support of this work. For more information on the project contact Peggy Dutton, Chair, Friends of the Perth Wildlife Reserve.

## OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEWS

Tom Foulkes

Amalgamation in 1997/98 in Eastern Ontario has currently led to at least 5 official plan reviews. BBS (North Burgess) and Drummond-North Elmsley (DNE) both have review processes in place with Novatech and Delcan respectively being the planning consultants. BBS established a steering committee (OP Review Cttee) composed of business, agriculture and lake representatives. Structures surrounding the DNE effort are not yet (March 2) determined. Official Plans lead to bylaws which lead to site plans and implementation and decisions with respect to development, preservation and protection of our lakes. Consistency between the two plans is important to Otty Lake perspective. Planning issues include: wetland designations, setbacks, minor variances, site plan control, harmonization, general standards, frontage, shoreline conservation and perhaps most important, septic systems (cleaning, transfer, inspection, etc). Anyone interested in participating in the process (especially in DNE), contact Brian Perkins or Tom Foulkes). **NOTE:** DNE plans an open meeting for participation in this subject in April.

## SAFE BOATERS - YOUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As a boater, you are responsible for equipping yourself, for operating your boat safely and for ensuring the safety of those on board. Operators and/or owners of pleasure craft that do not comply with Canadian laws and regulations could be subject to penalties or fines.

The Small Vessel Regulations outline the minimum mandatory safety equipment required to be carried out on a boat, safety precautions to follow before and while boating, and construction standards for a recreational boat. All required safety equipment on board must be in good operating order.

As the owner or person entrusted by the owner, you are in violation of the regulations if you operate any craft that does not have all the required equipment on board and in good working order.

**Careless Operation:** Operators could be charged or ticketed for A) operating craft in a way that could adversely affect the safety of people or property, considering the weather, visibility, amount of traffic, or number of other boats or people nearby, manoeuvrability, navigation conditions and hazards.

B. Operating in a careless manner without due care and attention for the factors listed above and the safety of others.

**Water-skiing or towing:** Spare seating must be provided for every person being towed; no towing is permitted from one hour after sunset to sunrise; and the vessel may not be remotely controlled.

**Engines:** Boats are not permitted within 5 miles of shore without a noise abatement mechanism in use.

**Engine start-up:** The engine space blower must be operated for at least 4 minutes immediately before starting a gasoline engine.

**Fuelling:** During fuelling, all occupants of the boat must be ashore, all engines must be shut off, all flames must be extinguished and leakage and spillage into the hull must be prevented. Portable fuel tanks must be filled ashore.

**Fuel-burning systems:** Must install system in accordance with the manufacturers' recommended practices.

**NOTE** that life saving cushions are no longer approved as personal flotation equipment.

Coast Guard web site [www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca](http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca).  
Boating Infoline 1-800-267-6687..

## MID-LATITUDE IS JUST AN ATTITUDE

The 45th parallel runs through the town of Lanark and so Otty Lake is only 10 miles (16 km) south of being just halfway between the Equator and the North Pole. And we consider ourselves a northern country.

## NATURAL BIRD FEASTS *Amy Pokorny*

If you'd enjoy an informal, permanent, though seasonal, bird-feeding hedge or 'station' of local spring flowering shrubs, try this: string a medium gauge electric wire or old plastic clothesline along your lot border. Many kinds of birds will alight on it to rest while their digestive tracts dispose of fruit seeds or stones already scarified or softened by their gastric juices. If you are near other low-growing woodlands or field hedges, you can hope to see a number of fruit-eating birds that will provide this service. With luck you might catch sight of some of the more colourful, large billed (big mouthed) birds specifically created for berry eating. Examples are orioles, waxwings, bluebirds, robins, grosbeaks, tanagers, starlings and blackbirds. Some of the shrubs to be seeded are viburnums, cherries, wild plums, sumac, elderberries, hawthorns, buckthorn, service berries or mountain ash.

Of course, this is a slow growth enterprise. It will take years for all these birds to plant all these seeds for all these shrubs. For greater variety and shorter time, you might try "The Seed Source" in Kemptville, run by Ted Cormier of the Society of Nut Growers, who explores every corner of Lanark County collecting seed. Thus he knows precisely where every berry or fruit growing sort of shrub, vine or tree grows. For a faster creation of a living feeding station, buy plants or even put in a hedge of white cedar, to remain unpruned. The G Howard Ferguson Forest Station at Kemptville has available a few of the most popular varieties of native shrubs, such as dogwoods and viburnum. Whichever way you choose, good long-term luck!

## **BUILDING AT THE LAKE**

*Dave Code*

With the approach of spring and summer, some of us may be thinking of building a shed, a dock or an addition to the cottage. If so, it is very important to know what the rules are, if only to avoid embarrassment later. Those rules have been put in place to protect and preserve the lake for all of us, so in conscience we are all taking care to observe them.

For any structure, be it a cabin, an addition to a cottage, a boathouse or any other structure - the person to contact is the Building Inspector to find out if a permit is needed or whether the proposed structure is legally permitted.

### **NORTH BURGESS -**

Terry Peacock 267-5353 OR 1-800-810-0161

### **NORTH ELMSLEY -**

Ray Scissons 267-6500 OR 283-2083

For any work on the shore, the erection of a permanent dock or other change to the natural shoreline, the permission of the Ministry of Natural Resources must be obtained. MNR (Carleton Place) 257-5735

## **PERTH MUSEUM COTTAGE HISTORY EXHIBITION**

The Museum urges Otty Lake cottagers to contribute old photos, anecdotes of personalities, events and enterprises associated with cottage life along with any artefacts suitable for the exhibition. The premises are fully secured and the museum will offer to photo reproduce contributions. Contact **Debbie Sproule** (267-1947) to **John Gibb-Carsley** (267-4812 or FAX 264-1130 or email [carsley@superaje.com](mailto:carsley@superaje.com) before May 3 for the June-July exhibition.

## **FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JULY 11 1999**

In the water testing program, secchi discs (clarity) has not varied much over the past 27 years; the fecal count has improved since 1996; placing dye in septic tanks has not been successful in determining if the system is functioning properly.

MNR cautions against eating larger fish from Otty Lake because of the concentration of mercury.

OLA members were urged to volunteer to assist with the production and mailing of the newsletter and to contribute items to the editor.

The members confirmed the continued participation of OLA in the proposed Alliance of Rideau Lakes Associations.

The 1998-99 budget of \$5,100 income and \$4.451 expenses was approved.

## **FEATHERS** *Cathy Kari*



## **BIRDS IN THE COLD**

Have you ever wondered how birds survive the winter, especially when temperatures drop to minus 35C? It turns out that birds adjust quite differently from mammals, which store up extra fat, put on extra fur and often huddle together for warmth.

Birds have much less opportunity to reduce heat loss by physical means. While they do add some extra fat in winter, they are sharply limited in the amount by the necessity of flight. The amount of fat they add is usually only enough to get through 16 to 24 hours of fasting - or one long cold winter night. Birds also add feathers - perhaps increasing their feather weight by 50% from summer, but even with the feathers fluffed up while roosting, this is barely enough to maintain their basic metabolic rate at air temperatures 10 degrees below their body temperature. Most birds also have very few opportunities to modify the temperature of their surroundings, although some species of grouse will burrow into snow and tunnel a short distance to roost for periods from a few hours to as much as three days.

So how do birds survive? It turns out that they shiver. All of us have shivered when we are cold, and we generally go in from the cold or put on more clothes, two options not available to birds. So the birds keep shivering. All winter. In order to do this they need lots of fuel to keep the shivering muscles going. This is one reason that keeping feeders stocked in winter is so important. In the winter, especially when the temperature drops significantly, birds

need to spend most of their non-roosting hours searching for food.

Besides shivering, some birds such as Chickadees lower their body temperatures during periods of non-activity. During the night they can lower their body temperature by as much as 10 or 12 degrees C and enter a state of controlled hypothermia. They do this by stopping from shivering periodically until they reach the optimum body temperature, and from then on they shiver throughout the night in regular bursts.

Birds also have problems with appendages in winter. If they didn't need them, birds would be better off without legs in winter. Think of ducks swimming around in freezing cold water or gulls standing on ice. How do they keep their feet warm, and in keeping them warm, how do they prevent them from draining too much heat from the body? The answer is that they shunt blood through a "heat exchanger", which intercepts heat on its way down to the feet and maintains the extremity at a considerably lower temperature than the core of the body. The "heat exchanger" in birds consists of veins and arteries that are very close together. When the temperature drops, veins near the surface of the legs constrict and cause more blood to be shunted through deeper veins close to or in contact with the arteries. As the cooler blood returns from the feet it travels close to the hotter blood coming from the core, causing a transfer of heat from the warm to the cool blood. In this way warm arterial blood is pre-cooled on its way out to the feet, and the cool venous blood is pre-warmed on its way in. If it happens that the extremity risks freezing, there occurs an increase of blood supply and arterial pressure which causes the arteries to enlarge, which in turn causes the deep veins to constrict in order to force more blood to return to the core via the superficial veins. This heat exchange mechanism is also well developed in animals as varied as beavers and whales.

So keep your feeders well stocked with good quality food at least until late April and marvel at winter birds shivering all through the night.

## **FROM THE PERTH COURIER 1973**

***"Members of the Otty Lake Pollution Control Committee endorsed a motion that gave far-reaching powers to eliminate the pollution of Otty Lake....At the meeting, over 150 cottages gave the executive unanimous support ... of a mandate to pursue, as vigorously as possible, such legal remedies as are now available against individual property owners or public authorities to prevent further deterioration of the general water quality of Otty Lake.***

***From now on, any person who is known to have a faulty septic tank may be charged or ordered to rectify his septic system. This could also involve public authorities who knowingly understand that the lake is deteriorating and are making no effort to have the situation remedied....***

***This declaration of war against the deterioration and the polluting of the water is believed to be the first of its kind by a group of people owning lakeshore properties in Ontario....At the present time, the contamination is higher than it was at the peak period at Labour Day in 1972."***

## **OTTY LAKE LOONS**



The lake froze over on December 29, much later than the normal date about December 18. Amy Pokorny reports that there were 96 loons on the lake in front of her cottage on December 23 and more than 100 on December 28.

Volunteers are needed to take part in the loon survey during the spring and summer. Call Brian Perkin.

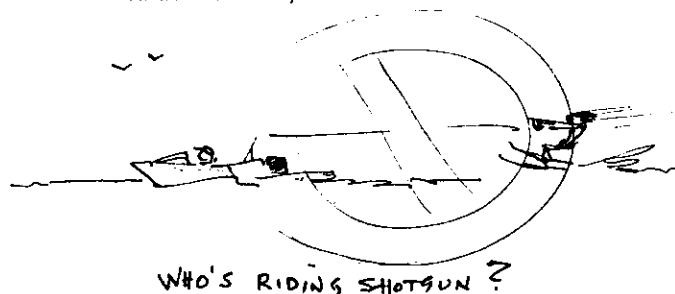
## **RIDEAU RIVER BIODIVERSITY\***

The Canadian Museum of Nature in cooperation with RVCA is undertaking an extensive two year project to determine the health of the biodiversity of the Rideau River from Smiths Falls to Ottawa. The researchers will be looking at fish, plants, water chemistry, phytoplankton, molluscs, birds, reptiles, amphibians and aquatic insects.

## **TAY RIVER WATERSHED PLAN\***

One of the recommendations of the 1995 Perth Community Strategic Plan was a study to protect the Tay River ecosystem. The process to produce a watershed plan (also known as guidelines for sustainable development) began with a well attended public meeting on November 26. The Tay flows through Central Frontenac, South Frontenac, BBS, DNE and the Town of Perth.

\* from Around the Rideau, RVCA



## MEMBERSHIP

Dick Atkinson

The OLA membership year is from Jan 1 to Dec 31, and that is why this first Newsletter of 1999 contains a request for fees. If you look at the label on your envelope, you should see a date, and most of you will see 1998 or a single digit in the upper right corner. This means that your 1999 fees have not yet been received and it would be appreciated if you would send a cheque in the mail along with the "tear-off" form from the last page of the Newsletter. If you wish, you can pay your fee at the Annual General Meeting in July, or give it to your Counselor.

Those of you who have paid ahead will see 1999, 2000 or 2001 on the label. A few residents find it convenient to pay for two or three years, and for 1999, 41 residents are paid ahead. By the way, the OLA fees system is fully Y2K compliant, no worries about that.

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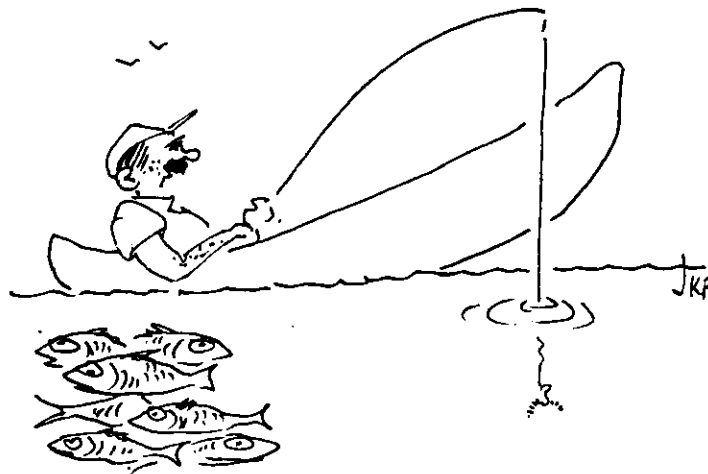
fax Attn Karen 744-0947

**Circulation, printing, mailing**

Dick Atkinson, Charlie Olver

Most lakes have an association, and the Board is pleased that OLA membership is among the highest of all the associations in Ontario, 76.25% of lakefront residents. Otty Lake has been testing the water continuously for over 25 years, and has a database history that is the envy of the ministry and neighboring lake associations. OLA supports a pollution free lake system. Fees are used for water testing, newsletters and programs that maintain good water quality. Everyone benefits in maintaining the lake environment.

The Board, Committees and Counselors list has 54 names of people who freely give of their time to work on behalf of all residents. You are asked to support this worthwhile and substantial effort. There is a space on the form for comments and for any questions you have for the Board. I will ensure that your comments and questions are passed to the appropriate Board Member. If you can volunteer, please indicate this on the form or call me at 613-267-4587/825-5619 and I'll forward your name to the Nomination Committee



**Otty Lake Association. 1999 Fees \$ 15.00**

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